

REMARKS

Upon entry of the foregoing amendments, claims 2 and 7-16 will be pending. Claims 6 and 17-19 are canceled. Previously, claims 1 and 3-5 were canceled. Claims 2, 7, 14, and 16 were amended. Claims 2 and 7 were amended to provide clarity to the terms “receptor compartment” and “donor compartment.” In addition, claim 2 was amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 6. Claim 14 was amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 7. The amendments to claims 2, 7, and 14 include reciting that a bubble chamber or means for removing bubbles is located in the top surface of the receptor compartment, support for which can be found in paragraph 38 and Figure 9. Claim 16 was amended to change its dependency. No new matter has been added.

The claims, as amended, recite a bubble channel or means for removing bubbles located in the top surface of the receptor. As the application explains in paragraph 38, “[t]he channel can simply be a depression formed in the top surface of the receptor compartment that extends between the first and second outlets.” In this way, any step where bubbles can become trapped present in prior art diffusion cells at the interface between the bottom surface of the diffusion membrane and the remainder of the top surface of the receptor compartment is reduced. (par. 38). Automatic migration of bubbles towards the second outlet is then facilitated. (par. 38).

35 U.S.C. §102(b) Rejection of claims 2 and 6-19

Claims 2 and 6-19 have been rejected as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,972,694 (Mathus). Applicants respectfully traverse because Mathus fails to show either a bubble channel or means for removing bubbles that is located in the top surface of the receptor compartment. Mathus is directed to a “multi-well plate” and describes in FIG. 9B a membrane that slants upward towards an access port. (Col. 7, lines 50-51). Mathus also shows a top surface that divides the access port. The top surface of Mathus fails, however, to teach or suggest the bubble channel or the means for

removing bubbles in the top surface. Because of this, the Office Action fails to provide cited art that recites every claim limitation. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) are respectfully requested.

If allowance of this application may be expedited by resolution of simple issues through a telephone conference, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

If there are any additional charges in connection with this amendment, the Examiner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 50-3329 therefor.

Respectfully submitted,

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